l: Krasheninnikov N-5 (1736-40) 1764 Kamchadal

The ſables of *Kamtſchatka* excel all other ſables of *Siberia*, both in largeneſs, thickneſs of hair, and brightneſs; but in point of blackneſs they do not come up to thoſe of *Olekmine* and *Vitime*: however their other properties are ſo valuable, that the *Kamtſchatka* ſables have by much the preference; and in *China*, where they know how to improve the colour, fetch ſo great a price that few of them are brought into *Ruſſia*. The ſables of *Tegbil* and *Oukine* are moſt eſteemed, and are ſometimes ſold for thirty rubles a pair. Mr. *Steller* ſays, that the worſt are hunted about the *Lopatka* and *Kurilſkoy* ſeas. It often happens that the worſt kind of ſables ſhall have their tails ſo black and thick haired, that they will ſell dearer than any other.

Before the conqueſt of *Kamtſchatka* there was ſo great a plenty of ſables that one hunter would kill ſeventy or eighty in a year; and that not for the ſake of the furr, but the fleſh, which they eſteem very delicious. The inhabitants at that time willingly agreed to pay their tribute in ſables; and were glad to receive a knife for eight, and an ax for eighteen. Some merchants have gained in one year by furrs only more than thirty thouſand rubles. The ſables are ſtill in much greater plenty here than in any other country, as is obſerved by every one who has been upon the ſpot, and compared their tracts upon the ſnow with what are ſeen either upon the rivers *Lena* or *Beloy*, and this even in the neighbourhood of the forts. And if the people of *Kamtſchatka* were as induſtrious in hunting as thoſe about the *Lena*, they could ſell a great many more than they; but ſuch is their natural lazineſs, that they never kill more than what they muſt pay in tribute, and what will pay their debts. They look upon him as an extraordinary good hunter that kills ſix or ſeven ſables in a winter; and ſeveral are not able to furniſh their tribute furrs, but muſt borrow either from the *Ruſſian* Coſſacks, or ſome more induſtrious hunter of

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their own country, to whom for payment they are bound to work the whole enſuing ſummer. Their baggage when they go to hunt conſiſts of a net, a bow and arrows, a fire-ſteel with flint and tinder. When they find a ſable concealed either in the earth or under the root of ſome tree, they throw the net over the place, in which he entangles himſelf when he comes out. With the bow and arrows they ſhoot them when they fly to the trees; and the ſteel and flint are to ſtrike fire, by which they ſmoke them, and drive them out of their holes. The beſt hunters, to be nearer the game, go out with their whole families to the hills, where they build huts and live the whole winter.

Although the ſtone foxes, and hares, abound in *Kamtſchatka*, yet hardly any one thinks it worth his trouble to hunt them, their furrs being of ſmall value; and when they fall into the fox traps, they uſe their ſkins as coverings in their beds. The *Kamtſchatka* ſtone foxes are little better than the hares of *Tourouchan*, which are very bad, the hair eaſily falling off. *Steller* relates, that ſome uſed to ſew the tails of the ſtone foxes to the hare-ſkins of *Tourouchan*, and impoſe them upon the ignorant as true ſtone fox-ſkins, the thickneſs of the ſkin and furr making it difficult to diſcover the cheat.

Marmottas * abound every where in *Kamtſchatka*. The *Koreki* uſe their ſkins for cloaths; and, indeed, they are reckoned no ordinary dreſs, being both light and warm. *Steller* compares the furrs made of the backs of the marmottas to the ſpotted feathers of birds, eſpecially if ſeen at a diſtance; and he alſo ſays, that this animal is found both upon the continent and the

* Marmotta minor. GMEL.

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105 The Itel'mens believed in evil mountain and forest
[1776] spirits, the sea-spirit, Mitg, good protecting spirits, etc. Anthropomorphic images of the spirits were usually made of wood.

[1793] The central figure of Itel'men mythology was the raven-creator, Kutkh. But he was not held in esteem, and various comical and obscene stories were told about him.

[1764] The bodies of dead adults were given to the dogs to eat; children were
[1756] buried in hollow trees. The Itel'men shamans did not have any special clothing or tambourines.

[1799] In the middle of the 18th century, the Itel'mens were converted to Christianity, but they continued to cling to their animistic ideas.

Information about the abundance of fur on Kamchatka received from Luka
175 Morozko and Atlasov attracted the attention of the tsarist government and
648 the Yakutiyan governors.

A special official—a prikashchik—was appointed to collect taxes. The Kamchatka prikashchiks, who were virtually the full masters of the peninsula, often abused their power. In addition to the fur-tax, they exacted from the population great quantities of furs for their own enrichment. The predatory extermination of fur animals, and most of all, sable, sharply reduced the catch, and the Itel'mens were often unable to pay the tax in full. The arbitrary extortion of cured fish, "sweet grass" for wine-making, lily tubers, berries, cedar nuts, seal blubber, skins, and even sleds, boats and clothing, for the benefit of the tax collectors became systematic. In addition to all this, the natives suffered from exploitative trading and its consequences—debt slavery.

175 The Itel'mens' struggle against extortions and oppression expressed
648 itself at first in attacks on individual representatives of the tsarist govern-
669 ment and raids on the tax treasury. Large uprisings broke out in 1706, 1711 and 1731.

The rebellion of 1731 involved nearly all the Itel'mens. After its suppression, a special "investigating office" was sent to the area to look into its causes. The leaders of the rebellion were executed. Some of the officials were also punished.

[161] The quelling of rebellions by armed force and the arbitrary rule of the
[731] local officials reduced the Itel'men population. But the principal reason for the population decline was the epidemics of smallpox, typhus and other
[614] diseases which devastated entire districts. The remnants of the various
[178] clans could no longer exist independently and united into larger territorial
[728] units. Thus, instead of the former clan villages, new settlements sprang up, inhabited by members of various clans. New villages were also created by compulsory resettlement. Thus, after the rebellion of 1731, the inhabitants of the village of Klyuchi were resettled in Kozyrevsk; the inhabitants of Nachiki were moved there from the western coast of the peninsula.

175 The system of tax collection through the village elders and the develop-
648 ment of barter with Russians resulted in the accumulation of private prop-
556 erty in the hands of some individuals. As early as the 1730's, there were
426 toyons (elders) who lent sables to their kinsmen to enable them to pay their tribute, in exchange for subsequent work.

The economic condition of the Itel'mens did not improve in the latter half
175 of the 18th century. This was due above all to the system of tax collection
648 and the tyranny of the local authorities. Taxes were collected, not from the present population, but according to lists, which included men long dead. The living thus had to pay taxes for dead relatives. Extremely onerous, too,
[466] was the imposition of the duty to transport numerous officials, as well as cargo, without compensation all over the peninsula. This took the men away from their occupations and condemned them to frequent periods of famine.

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View of the village of Sedanka, early 20th century.

The development of trade gave rise to the exploitation of the Itel'mens by merchants. These gave the Itel'mens goods on credit, often against their will; then, if the debt was not paid in time, they doubled or tripled the sum. Often, an Itel'men would have to pay as long as he lived for some small article, such as a knife. This type of trade did not disappear even after the formation of the Russo-American Company (1799). The company sold its wares at prices 10 times higher than their actual value. By the 1860's, the indebtedness of the Itel'mens to this company had risen to the grandiose sum of 150,000 rubles. 175 439 426

The Itel'men economy remained essentially subsistence. The fishing catch went solely for the satisfaction of the fishermen's needs, and none of it was sold. The only articles that had commodity value were furs. Villages were governed by elders, elected by the villagers and approved by the Russian administration. Very often the post of elder was hereditary. Survivals of clan organization were preserved among the Itel'mens until the 20th century. These included elements of collective production and distribution of food products—collective fishing by means of fishtraps, collective seal hunting, division of the carcass of a whale cast up on the shore, the custom of mutual aid, etc. 175 [433] [622] [648] [178] [614] [476]

The first efforts at introducing agriculture were made after the founding of a monastery (the Uspenskaya Pustyn') on Kamchatka, in the first quarter of the 18th century. In the 1740's the first group of Russian peasants was resettled in Kamchatka. Further groups of settlers followed, but agriculture enjoyed small success. The administrative method of introducing agriculture among the Itel'mens could yield no appreciable results with the primitive agricultural techniques of that time. The products of agriculture therefore held a small place in Itel'men economy. Gardening was more successful. In the second half of the 19th century, all Itel'men villages had small gardens, producing potatoes, turnips and horse-radish. But even this gardening was negligible in scope and extremely primitive. The natives were unskilled in tending plants; they dug the soil with wooden hoes, did not know about watering, and so on. 175 648 241 [192]

Cattle were first brought to Kamchatka in 1733, and again, from time to time, in succeeding years. The livestock was kept grazing all year; there was little preparation of hay. Horses were also left to their own devices, and became so wild that they were difficult to catch. They were used chiefly in autumn as riding and pack animals. Wheel transport, such as the cart, 175 648 231